

THE SWORD OF THE LORD

and of John R. Rice

"And they cried. The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." Judges 7:20

An Independent Religious Weekly, Standing for the Verbal Inspiration of the Bible, the Deity of Christ, His Blood Atonement, Salvation by Faith, New Testament Soul Winning and the Premillennial Return of Christ. Opposes Sin, Modernism, and Denominational Overlordship

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Counting The Cost

(Stenographically reported sermon of Dr. John R. Rice, Sunday night, June 4, 1939, Dallas, Texas).

The message tonight will be found in Luke, chapter fourteen. It is a message upon which I have never preached before. The Bible is still full of texts and passages on which I have never preached. The Bible is an inexhaustible Book. It is a mine, with rich veins of treasure which never run dry.

I will begin with verse twenty-five and read down through verse thirty-five.

"And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

"26. If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

"27. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

"28. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

"29. Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

"30. Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

"31. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

"32. Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassador, and desireth conditions of peace.

"33. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

"34. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

"35. It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

— Luke 14:25-35.

The Lord intended there to be an enormous difference between a Christian and one who is not. It is a sad thing and it shows that we are in the "falling away" time, that Christians these days live so much like unsaved people do. The Lord tells us in II Timothy 3:2-5, that in the last days

"Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

"Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

"Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God."

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

It is sometimes a hard thing for us today to distinguish between one who says he is a Christian and one who is not. I say that surely we are in the last days. The Lord intended there to be a difference between a Christian and

one of the devil's children. He intended that there should be an enormous gulf, that they should be as different as black and white.

The Lord says in II Corinthians the sixth chapter:

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

"15. And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

"16. And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

"17. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

"18. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

— Verses 14-18.

Now God does not want Christians living like the devil's crowd. You had just as well go into this and count the cost whether or not you want to be a Christian. In the first part of this sermon, you will think I am discouraging you. But the discouraging you are going to get, you had better get now and have it over and weigh this thing carefully and see if it is worth while to be a Christian. I frankly say it costs. You ought to know what is involved and face it. It is a serious thing to say, "I am going to be a Christian." You are to have a different heart within, you are to be born again. You are even to be a different man, to have Christ living in you through the Holy Spirit. If you are not different, there is doubt whether you are saved, and if you are saved inwardly and are not saved outwardly, your life will be a constant grief and a fight, with unhappiness and dissatisfaction for yourself, and for God, and your influence will be wrong through all the days of your life. Everybody should count the cost and make up his mind to get on one side of the fence or the other.

The Saviour gave this parable, "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish."

If you are going to build a tabernacle, you had better sit down and count the cost. If you build a foundation and do not have enough money to go ahead with it, people will begin to say, "I told you they would never build it. They do not have enough money. They cannot do it." And people would begin to mock. You may say, "I will be a Christian," but you do not stop and count the cost. I want to tell you what will happen. First, a lot of people say they will be a Christian who are not Christians, who have never been saved. That is pictured in the Bible when Jesus said in the parable,

"A sower went forth to sow;

"And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and

the fowls came and devoured them up:

"Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

"And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away" (Matt. 13:3-8).

Some seed fell on stony ground but it did not take root because it did not have enough soil. They had no root in themselves, the Bible said. That pictures a person who has never been born again.

I say to some people, "Will you take Christ as your Saviour?" And they say yes. But they never stop to consider and weigh what they say and may not be saved at all. They may not have salvation in the heart, a turning of the whole soul to Christ. It may be just on the surface and incidental and have no meaning at all. Not everybody that says, "Lord, Lord," is saved. Not everybody who walks down the aisle is a Christian. Not everybody who is baptized is born again. Not everybody who says, "Sure, I will be a Christian," is really saved. As Christian workers, we had better face this thing, and face it squarely. It is a serious business, and we ought to know what it will cost. Jesus said if you lay a foundation and then are not able to build on top of that foundation, everybody will mock at you. First of all, you may not truly be saved.

But if you are saved, your life is out of joint. You say, "I am saved," but you will not give up the life you had before. You have been born again, but you are still holding on to the same crowd, and the same bad habits. You are still talking as you did before. Inside you are one thing, and outside you are another thing. There is disappointment and frustration and failure all the days of your life.

Oh, my Christian friends, if you are saved you had better sit down and count the cost whether or not it really pays to be on the Lord's side. If you are lost, of course you ought to come tonight and be saved. I tell you frankly you ought to be saved now. But I tell you fair and square, it ought to be "whole hog" or none, and you ought to face that and settle it out and out for Jesus Christ.

And you better settle it now, for Jesus said, "What king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?" If he decides, "I am not able with my ten thousand men to whip those twenty thousand," then if he has any sense, he would sit down and write a message to the other king desiring peace. He might say, "I am angry, but I am not angry enough to get the whole outfit wiped out." So he sends a messenger saying, "Let us have peace." You had better send and make peace. If you say, "Well, it costs so much to be a Christian. If I have to give up my sins and turn my back on my own way, if the Lord is supposed to be put first in my life and have a say about everything, if I cannot have my way about anything — if it costs that much to be a Christian, then I will not be a Christian. I will declare war against Jesus Christ. I am going to live for the devil." But now wait — the Scripture says before you do that you

had better stop and figure whether with your puny resources you will be able to meet the enemy. Death is coming! Judgment is coming! Eternity is coming! Are you able to meet them with human strength and power? If you are not, you had better send an ambassador desiring peace. You had better say, "God, I cannot fight you. I will lose everything if I do not give up myself to you." My friend, you had better count the cost before you go to Hell.

You may say you cannot afford to give up this or that, but, brother, you may find yourself giving up everything in this world and in eternity, too — your poor soul and peace and all — giving it up for torment in an endless Hell!

That certainly is a thing to be considered. Stop and count the cost. Stop and figure what you are going to do when death comes and which side you are going to be on. Preachers ought to preach more on these themes and there would be more real and genuine repentance. The members of their churches do not live for God. Preachers should have such an urgency in preaching until the members of their churches would say, "I must come back to live for Christ out and out or I will have my name taken off the church roll and get my bad influence out of the way." It is a blot on the name of any church to have church members that drink and lie and sell booze and live for the devil and go to picture shows, etc. I would make up my mind which way I was going. You ought to be separate. You are going to be separate in the next world when Jesus comes. There will be a separation in the graveyard when the dead in Christ rise first, as the Scripture says. And here in this life you ought to be separate. A Christian and a sinner are not alike in their hearts, and they should not be alike outwardly. There should be a real change, a division between them. I beg every one of you here to get off the fence, and count the cost and ask yourself the question: "Does it pay to be a Christian?" If it does, the Saviour said, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." You are not really a follower of Jesus — you may have been born again, but you are not really a follower of Jesus unless you say "good-bye" to everything you have in this world. Can you say, "I am willing"? Are you willing to hate father, and hate mother, and hate husband, or wife and land and everything in this world? If you are not willing to do that, you are not fit to be His disciple. That is what Jesus said. If you are a Christian, you ought to go over the thing fair and square. I would count the cost. I would weigh it honestly, and I would make up my mind that if it did not pay to live for God, I would turn my back on Him. I would be out and out for God or I would make up my mind to be against Him. I would not be a lying hypocrite in the matter.

Some people bring a curse and shame and reproach on the cause of Christ because they claim to be Christians but they live for the devil. I would not be a lying hypocrite. I would make up my mind and count the cost, and if I found it pays to live for God, I would say, "I am going to pay the price, whatever it does cost." Or I would

get out. I would do one or the other.

The Bible says you had better count the cost. If a man says, "I am going to be a Christian," and he builds a foundation, and does not build a house on it, people will mock him. Too many Christians have laid a foundation but never have built anything on it. They made a start, but have never done anything for God. They have been saved but have never been baptized, or they were baptized but have never won a soul. They trusted the Lord, but they have not quit their tobacco or picture shows. They are saved, but their tongues did not get saved. They are saved, but their minds are lustful and wicked. Maybe you are saved, but your pocket book never did get saved.

You are saved but it does not make any difference in the home: there is no family altar. After you were saved you did not change your practice down where you work. You are saved but your mouth is not saved. You had better count the cost. Too many people have laid a foundation and have never built on it. That is the shocking shame on the church before the world today.

But Jesus said you had better beware lest you put on your armour and start to make war against God and do not have an army to meet Him.

You say, "No, sir, I am not going to be a Christian. I cannot do it. I would have to give up too much." You will find out that you have been giving up more on the devil's side and your poor, damned soul besides. You had better count the cost.

There are three things I lay before you which I want you to consider honestly and fairly. The first is: What does it cost to be a Christian? If it costs too much, I would not be a Christian. Do not let anybody tell you it does not cost something to be a real Christian. It does cost. Do not let anybody tell you that it does not matter. It does matter. And you had better make up your mind that there are some things to quit if you are saved.

And second, we will find out what it costs *not* to be a Christian. And third, we will talk about another matter: the danger of delay.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

All Friends Urged to Be Present In Services Sunday

BY JOE B. RICE

We are praising God for His blessings on our services last Sunday. We had souls saved and several additions to the church, some by baptism and some by letter. To HIM be all the praise. Won't you help to make this next Sunday's services what they should be by: (1) being in your place on time, (2) bring some friend with you, (3) and most important of all pray for God's blessings upon the service.

Services will be as follows: Sunday School at 9:30 and preaching services at 10:45 a.m., at Sunset and Tyler Streets. Sunday night service at 7:45 p.m. in the open air at 201 East Tenth Street. Radio WRR, 7:30 to 8:00 a.m. Rev. Joe B. Rice will be in charge of all services.

COUNTING THE COST

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

I. What It Costs to Be A Christian

What does it cost to be a Christian? What do you have to give up? First of all, you have to do a hard thing. You have to confess that you are a sinner. I tell you, there is not any way in this world of being a Christian without first of all coming to face a solemn fact, and that fact is that you are a sinner. You are a Hell-deserving sinner. You ought to go to Hell, and you will go to Hell, and your own sin will take you there, if you do not get something done about it. If you are ever to be a Christian, you can put this down, no one ever was a Christian, and no one ever will be a Christian until first of all he comes to admit to himself and to God, "I am a poor, wicked-hearted sinner, and I ought to go to Hell, and I must admit my sin and get it forgiven. That costs something. That is not easy. People do not like to admit that. I talked to a Jewish Rabbi from New York City on the train. We talked about the Jewish situation, and he was interested in that. We talked about Zionism, and, of course, he was interested. I tried to talk to him about the Jew from the standpoint of prophecy, but he derided me that I believed that sort of thing. We could not find a common Bible ground. I tried to talk about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but he was suspicious and on the defensive.

"But here," I said, "one thing I know, and you know, too, and that is, you are a sinner. You must have a sacrifice, but you do not have any more sacrifices. There is no passover lamb, no more bullock and no more red heifer, no more morning sacrifice and evening sacrifice, there is no scape goat, and no turtle doves. You are a sinner, and you know it, and you have nothing to do with that sin. You have nobody to take it away."

His face turned red, and he said, "No, I am not a sinner."

I said, "Now I have taken you at face value all the way before. But I know that is not so, and you know it is not so. Your wife who sits beside you knows it is not so. You are a wicked sinner, and you must pay for your sins if you do not find some one to atone for them."

She looked knowingly at him, and finally he smilingly said, "Well, all right."

Listen to me, right here is where people refuse to come to God. They are not willing to admit, "I am a poor, wicked, Hell-deserving sinner. I am guilty and I ought to go to Hell!"

I warn you now, if you are not willing to say that you will never be a Christian. If you are not willing to admit that, then you are damned and doomed, you will have no forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come. There is no salvation — God has none at all; the Bible offers none at all — for anybody who will not admit he is a sinner.

When John the Baptist preached there went out to him Jerusalem and all Judaea and all the region round about Jordan, and they were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. If you do not admit you are a sinner and need a Saviour, you will never be saved. The Bible says,

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THE SWORD OF THE LORD and of John R. Rice

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"There is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:22, 23).

The Bible says again, "All we like sheep have gone astray" (Isa. 53:6).

I say, You are a sinner. If you do not realize that and admit it, you cannot be saved. It costs something. You must humble yourself before God and admit you are a guilty sinner. That is one thing you must do if you are going to be a Christian. I am giving you the unpleasant side of it. But you are going to Hell if you do not admit you are a sinner. It costs, but you must confess you are a sinner.

If you are going to be saved, you must do more than confess you are a sinner, you must honestly repent of your sins. I tell you, here is a fundamental reason why a lot of people will not be saved. Being baptized never did save anybody and never will, and it could not save anybody. I am showing you now why any form or ceremony in the world could not possibly change the heart. God will never receive anybody for salvation until he honestly, in his deepest soul, hates sin and turns from sin. That is repentance. Now get this straight: repentance does not mean living a sinless life. Repentance does not mean "I have quit sin, so I will never sin any more." Repentance means, "In my heart I turn from sin, I hate sin, I am against it. I am guilty of it. I admit that, but I am sorry, and I turn from it." Repentance is not just sorrow for sin alone. That might be remorse. Nearly everybody when his sin leads to trouble is sorry. That is not what I am talking about. This is a turning in the heart from sin. If in your heart you do not have enough of sin, if you have not come to the place where you can say, "Oh, God, I am a sinner, I want to quit sin, I want to turn my back on sin, I am sorry." If you do not come that way, you cannot be saved. Now I am saying, repentance is a real, sincere turning of the heart from sin and the love of sin. If you have not done that you are not saved. If you do not do that you will never be saved. That is one thing you are going to have to face. There is not any way to hold on to the love of sin and to love the Lord. Mark you, everybody who is saved still sins. But people who are truly saved have in their hearts confessed their sins and in their hearts have lamented them and in their hearts have turned from them and long to be different. I am not talking about an outward practice. The best man that ever lived, the best woman that ever lived never did live up outwardly to all God put in the heart when they were saved. Brother, in your heart you may have repented, but in your heart there is grief because you are not a better Christian.

Repentance is the turning of the heart. You can turn the heart but it takes some long while to get the life changed. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Listen to me, again I say this, there is one thing that keeps people from being saved, and that is sin. I do not say if you sin you cannot be saved, but I say, as long as you keep holding on to sin and loving sin, you cannot be saved. Do you see the difference there? I believe that people who are saved do sin, but saved people are folk who turned in their hearts from sin and wanted God to forgive them and they are born again, with a new heart toward sin, as well as a new heart toward God. If you are not going to say to God, "I admit I am a sinner, and I turn from it, I repent," if you cannot do that, if that is too hard for you, then you are going to Hell. If you say, "No, sir, I love sin, I will not turn it loose, and you hold on to it, well, then, Brother, you are doomed. Nobody ever was saved, nobody ever will be saved until in the heart he repents — in the heart and not just with the lips — not just the way he lives. I do not want anybody to think that one good act can save you, or a thousand days or years of good living will save you. It will not. I say, in the heart — man must in his heart repent, or he cannot be saved.

Another thing it is going to cost you — you are going to have to give up self trust, all dependence

on self, all boasting about your goodness, and all relying on your goodness. There are two theories about how to get to Heaven. One is God's way and the other is man's way. God's way is Abel's way.

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh" (Heb. 11:4).

That bloody sacrifice pictured a Saviour. By that Abel said, "Lord, I get out here and sweat and grow a crop, but I cannot earn favor with God." You cannot go out here and dig in the ground and get gold and silver and offer it to God and have favor with God. Abel said, "I cannot make with my own hands implements, houses, furniture, pictures or anything and give that to God. That does not buy favor with God." Abel said, "I will kill this lamb, and as that warm red blood flows out onto the ground God knows I am thinking about and longing for the Lamb that God is going to send that will take away sin." He said, "I cannot depend on this lamb's shed blood to pay for my sin. It cannot do it, but I am looking to God for the sacrifice which this picture is. That is God's way of salvation. But man's way is Cain's way. Cain said, 'No blood for me.' Cain said, 'I do not care, I am as good as Abel is. I am as good as anybody else is.' Cain said, 'I will go out and work and make my living by the sweat of my face, and when I have made my good crop, I will bring the Lord some corn and tomatoes, and if He likes them, all right. If He does not like them, He can lump them. I am paying my way.'"

But the word of God said that God had no respect to the offering of Cain, and that God did not bless him, because sin lay at the door. I tell you, my friend, before you will ever be saved, you must be willing to say, "The best I could bring in this world is not good. All the good works I could do is not good, and God despises it and my righteousness is no better than filthy rags in God's sight (Isa. 64:6). My heart is deceitful and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9). You will have to say, 'Oh, God, I will have to give up any thought of saving myself.' If you come, you will have to come as a pauper. You are a pauper, and you will have to admit it. If you do not come that way, you are doomed for Hell. You cannot march up to God's front door and say, 'How do you do, God,' and walk in and shake hands and say, 'I have a favor to ask of You. I will do You a favor, and You do me a favor, and we will keep on even terms,' or, 'I want You to do something for me, and I will pay You for it.'"

No, do not think you can come that way. No, you are a poor, vile sinner. You cannot march up to God that way. You must come like a poor beggar in rags and filth and say, "I am a poor beggar, I cannot work. I am hungry. But won't you have mercy on me and give me something?" If you come to God, you must come that way. To be a Christian, it costs quitting depending on yourself. It means you must quit leaning on your own righteousness and lean on the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

Oh, the wickedness of this world! It wants to take the crown from Jesus Christ and put it on man! The lodges — all the lodges do that. I know anything about. The Masons and others teach that if you live a good life the great Architect of the Universe will say you have earned your way. If you hold out and live a good life you will get there after a while. That is not true. That is a deceit of Satan, and I warn you now, if you are ever saved, it is going to cost you this one thing — you will have to admit, "I am not good. I am weak. I am sinful. I am sold to sin, and if God does not have mercy on me and save me, I am gone! I have nothing to pay."

Now you say, "I do not like that." I know it. The Pharisee who went up to the temple to pray, paid his tithe, and lived a good life outwardly, but he would not admit he was a sinner, and he went to Hell. He did not mind paying a tithe, and that was right. He did not mind being honest. He paid his bills. He did not mind giving up adultery. He was not an adulterer. The Bible says so in Luke

the nineteenth chapter. He did not mind living a clean, straight life. But he said, "No, sir, God, I thank Thee I am not as other men are. I will not admit I am a sinner. I am paying my way." But I tell you that man went down to his house and died and went to Hell. He would not admit he could not save himself and he would not trust in God. He would not depend on the atonement Christ made. When Jesus said, "It is finished," the Pharisee said, "It is not finished for me. I will work mine out myself."

I say to you now, this goes against your pride. It stops your boasting mouth. That is one of the things it is going to cost you to be saved. You will have to admit you cannot do it. You will have to say, "I will take it like a beggar. I will take it with Jesus paying the price for me. I must be bought by the blood. I cannot save myself. I wish I could, but, God, I admit that I cannot."

Brother, everybody that is saved will have to come that road. You cannot be a Christian unless you do these things I am telling you. You must admit in your heart and to God that you are a sinner. I know it is awfully hard on your pride, but you must turn your heart away from sin and hate sin. Then you must turn away from your own self-righteousness. You cannot even trust your own goodness. You say, "I hate sin, but I am a sinner." You might say, "I want to go to Heaven but I ought to go to Hell." You have to say, "I want to go to Heaven, but I have no ticket. If I get there at all, I will have to get there on a pass." That is God's way to be saved. If that is too much, then go on to Hell. There is not any other way that one can possibly come to God. The Lord says here that you will have to surrender all right to yourself. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

Notice there is a distinction between a disciple and a Christian. Judas was a disciple, a follower, but he was not a Christian. Judas was not born again. So when the Lord says here, that unless a man hates father and mother, wife and children and brethren and sisters, he cannot be my disciple, He did not mean that you have to do that in order to be saved. Listen carefully now, and get this distinction. You do not have to turn your heart from wife or mother and other things to be saved. But in the heart you have got to turn to Christ. At least you are going to have to admit that you ought to be willing to give up father and mother and wife and children and houses and land for Him. You may be going your own way and yet truly be saved. Every Christian does in some matters. Some-

times you may say, "I want this or that." Maybe you do want it, but you have to admit you have no right to your own way any more. Jesus died, and when He died for sinners the sinner legally died. The sinner is counted dead to sin. He has no right any more to his own way. I do not mean when you are saved you do everything right. But when you are saved you ought to be willing to give up any claim that you have a right to your own way. You do not have any right. You are saved the rest of your life. You may go on in your own way, after you have truly been born again, after you are saved, after you are God's child, but you cannot be happy when you do. You are not doing right and you cannot hold your head up and face God with it. I am not talking about getting saved. I am saying that when you are saved God has a claim on you for every hour of the day, every minute, every second. It is a silly thing for anybody to say, "I am born again and my sins are nailed to the cross of Christ, but I have a right to my own way." You have not! You have already sold out when you were saved. That does not mean you will live a perfect life. I am not saying how you will live. I say, you have no right to your own way after you are saved. If there is anybody here who wants to be a Christian, but you say, "Although I want to be a Christian, I want still to retain all the deed, and all the papers on my own life. I want that still registered in my name. I want still to have all the say. I want to be the foreman, I want to be the boss, the straw boss, the chairman of the board, and everything else in my life." You may want that, but you have no right to that if you are saved. Anybody that comes and trusts Jesus Christ says, "I belong to Jesus Christ now. All I do that displeases Him is wicked and dishonest." A person ought to please Jesus in everything. He gives up all his rights to his own will when he is saved.

If you say, "I want to have my own way," (everybody wants to have his own way), then you go ahead, because after you are saved, you should say, "My way is wrong, and I am going to try to give Jesus the reins."

Let us see what it will cost you if you are saved. It will mean also that you will have a constant reminder of your sins. If you are saved and you go on and do something wrong, I will tell you what will be true. There are some important things in store when you get to be a Christian. For instance, I was only a boy when I was saved, but when I was a lost boy, there were some things I did wrong that did not bother me. People tell me again and again, "I was saved, but I got backslidden, and, Brother Rice, I did ten times as bad after I had been saved as I ever did

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

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COUNTING THE COST

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

before I knew the Lord.

Oh, I have been told many times, "I know after I was saved I really was lost again."

"How do you know you are lost?" I would inquire.

"I feel it," was their answer. "I feel worse now than before I was saved. I feel further away from God. I feel meaner now than I ever did before."

Do you know what that really is? When you are saved God's Holy Spirit moves in and you have a constant reminder about your sins. There is something now about it so that you do not have the freedom to sin you once had. Maybe back there you used to drink and it did not bother you at all. But after you are saved, I promise you it will bother you plenty. The Spirit of God takes charge and comes into your heart, and moves into your body. If you go on in sin, you are going to have trouble. You will have a reminder, an unease of conscience when you sin. Trouble comes for a Christian who still tries to hold on to sin. I wonder if there are Christians here who will bear me out in that? How many of you can say, "Yes, sir. After I was saved, I have had more trouble with the devil than I ever did before. I feel more guilty when I do wrong." (Many held their hands). When you did things wrong before you were saved, you did not think anything about it, but now it seems sinful and awful. You have a reminder now about sin that you did not have before. If you are going to be a Christian you should be willing to say, "All right, now I have the Spirit of God living in my body and He always tells me when I do wrong. If I will let Him He will keep me from sin. You are not going to be happy in sin when you are saved. There is something about sin that gets bitter. You may still do it, but it does not make you happy after you are saved."

I remember a young man in Decatur, Texas, about whom I heard a good many years ago who professed to be saved, and perhaps he was, I do not know. Some one asked him how he was getting along in his Christian life, and he said, "I have just enough religion to make me miserable." He did not have enough to have the victory over sin and whip the devil every day, but he had had a change in his heart so that he could not go back and enjoy sin as he used to, and it was a torment to him all the time.

If you have been saved, you will not enjoy your Christian life if all the time you are slipping back into sin. You are going to have a reminder when you do wrong. If you do not want the Spirit of God to live in your body and raise an objection about your sins, then I would not be saved, because that is what happens to Christians.

Here is another thing it costs to be a Christian. God not only reminds His children that they have sinned, but He actually punishes them. The Scripture says,

"For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. 12:6).

Do you wonder why sometimes God lets a wicked man go on and live in sin and yet he comes home and sleeps well at night? Maybe he is a liar, a cheat, a drunkard, lustful, and dishonest, and yet he can sleep and his conscience does not bother him at all. He goes on and prospers in business. David said,

"I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree" (Psalm 37:35).

You let a man after he has been saved, after God has given him light — you let him go back into sin. Will he get by with it? No. Somebody else's children may come along out here and I may see them do a lot of things wrong and I do not rebuke them, I do not reprove them. But you let one of these little girls with long hair, one of my girls, raise trouble in church and there is going to be a settlement. They are mine. I am accountable for them. So God is going to whip His own children when they sin. If you think you are going to be a Christian and go on in sin without any whipping, without any punishment, I warn you

now, when a child of God goes into sin, he gets whipped, he gets taken to the tan yard.

If you do not want that kind of God, I warn you, you had better not be saved. If God is going to keep you out of Hell, then all the whipping He will ever give you will have to be done down here. He is not going to send you to Hell if you have been saved. So He will have to whip you down here if you need it. And then after a while when He gets you to Heaven, He will kiss away the tears because sin will be all over with. A lost man may go on in his sin and not be punished here, but he will have to go to Hell after a while because he did not trust Jesus Christ. In that case, God says, "All right, I will leave off the whipping now. He has it coming to him, but he will get it in Hell." There is no hurry for God to punish a wicked sinner. But God is going to whip His own children. It costs something to be a Christian. If you are not willing to confess your sins and admit you are a sinner in your own heart and before God, if you are not willing to repent and turn from sin, if you are not willing to quit trusting in your own good works and trust in Jesus Christ alone, if you are not willing to have the Holy Spirit come in and remind you and if you are not willing to have God whip you, and chasten you, then you cannot be a Christian. You cannot be saved without going that way. That is the blood-bought way. It costs something to be a Christian.

What else? If you are going to be a Christian, folks will look down on you, maybe. A true Christian loses some things. He loses some friends. Sometimes a person says, "I do not know what I am going to do about my friends. I am saved now, and I will have to quit that crowd, and I do not know how I will cut loose from them."

Do not worry. You will have no trouble quitting them. If you stand up for Jesus like you should and talk about the Lord every time you see them, they will quit you. You do not need to worry about them running after you. If you are living out and out for Jesus Christ. If you really live for Jesus you will lose some friends.

"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12).

The world says you are nutty if you are very much of a Christian. They say you have gone crazy over religion. My friends, if you are a child of God you are going to be hated by this world. This world hated Jesus Christ and it will hate you, too, if you love Jesus. It really costs something to be a Christian.

II. What It Costs Not to Be A Christian

But I would like for you to see the other side, too. I have only shown you one side. Now let us see what it costs to be on the devil's side. Let us see what you will gain and what you will lose if you are not saved. In the first place, I warn you of this, there is no peace. Young people, listen to me. A part of your heart seeks for pleasure, and I do not blame young people for wanting to have a good time. They are like horses on a frosty morning. How many of you ever rode a good blooded horse on a frosty morning — one that was kept up in a stall and fed plenty? You had to watch him then or he would buck when he would not any other time in the world. Young people have young vigorous blood. You blame young people about flaming youth, but there are more flaming dads and mothers. If you had enough get-up, you would get into devilment, too.

You people that run down young folks. You remind me of a one-legged deacon who walked on a wooden leg. He arose in prayer meeting to testify and said, "One thing I never do is to dance." That wooden-legged deacon did not dance! I do not blame him. But these young people do not do some things you older people do. Young people, boys and girls, your restlessness, your looking for pleasure — you do not know it now, but that is because you do not have real peace. It will be showing a little later. You cannot say what it is now. Now you think you will be happy. When you run down this rainbow. You say, "I will

build my castles." But I tell you with a heart that is tender — I have had heartaches, too — I tell you because I have had my castles tumble about me, I have tried the primrose path and it had thorns in it. And I tell you that sooner or later all these things that promise peace and joy and pleasure and thrill will turn to nought and you will be just like other older people — disillusioned, unhappy, with no peace. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. 57:21).

Young people deceive themselves. Young people do not know their own hearts. They do not quite see through a thing. I tell you now, the devil has no happy old people, because sin never did make anybody happy. You will not have peace if you go on in sin. That is one thing it will cost to stay on the devil's side — you cannot have peace. You never will know real peace of heart outside Jesus Christ. That is one thing it will cost you if you are never saved.

Another thing, if you live on the devil's side, and are never saved, it will cost you disappointment and failure. Listen to me, boys and girls here tonight who are not Christians. People who are not Christians have a high standard. They say, "I am going to live right. I will be a good man, or I will be a clean woman. I will do thus and so." All those things you hope to do, but I tell you now, you will not. You are going to fail after a while, and you will look back on your life behind you, and it will be strewn with broken dreams and plans that did not work out. Disillusionment and sadness and failure will come, and still later you will see all of life a failure. It does not bring happiness. You may make money but money will not bring happiness. You may get fame, you marry the girl you want or the man you want, you may get the job you want, but I tell you now, my friends, life without Jesus at the end is a barren life, full of disappointment and failure.

Many people have talked to me and in countless cases they have told me, "I wish I had been saved when I was a boy. Much of my life is gone now and there is nothing but disappointment."

Another thing. If you are not saved, life is full of disappointments and fears. Down in the heart of everybody that is away from God there is a haunting fear, and people try to drown that fear the best they can. Do you know why some people are infidels? Because in his heart a man has a fear of God and Hell and judgment and death until after a while he says he has got to get rid of that and he builds up a wall against it until he does not believe in God. He is scared. He does not want to believe in an eternity. He is afraid of meeting God. There is not a single soul here who is lost, but that you are afraid.

I spent the night back yonder when I was a boy teaching in a country school in a home where there was a young man. I thought it was a strange thing—he was one of the biggest cursers and drinkers in that community. He was loud-mouthed, he was guilty of all kind of sin. One night we were left at the house alone, and to my astonishment as soon as the rest of the family got away this young fellow who was a loud-mouthed, drinking, cursing bully, a roughneck, a fighting man, got up and barred all the doors and put chairs against them.

I said, "What's the idea?" "You never can tell what might come along," he said.

He sat there and every time there was any kind of a noise outside he would jump and tremble. He was scared. Sin does not help people. Sin does not bring contentment. But it puts fear in your heart.

A thirteen year old girl that I had the joy of winning to Christ said, "Now I won't be afraid to go to sleep any more."

If you are never saved, all your days you will have fear. You know it is your guilty sins that brings

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

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you remorse of conscience and makes you fear. You think you can go on in sin. But it is going to cost you remorse of conscience. You think you can go on in sin and never have to give an account. You are going to give an account to yourself. You own conscience will accuse you. One day you will pay for all your sin in remorse. Sin never does pay. Sin does not bring contentment.

Do you know why some people never spend an hour alone? Do you know why some people never sit down and quietly meditate but are on the go all the time? They think they have to have a wild time. Why do they get drunk? Because they cannot face their own conscience. A guilty conscience and remorse stings them day and night. Nobody on the devil's side will escape that forever. Some day your conscience will catch up with you and you will see that sin does not pay. If you never are saved, as certain as there is a God, as certain as the Bible is true, as certain as death, as certain as anything God has ever told you, you are going to wake up in Hell, an eternal place of torment! Awful? Yes! But it is certain. Eternal? Yes. Away from God and begging for a drop of water to cool your tongue. I tell you, my friends, Hell is certain for unrepentant, unconverted, not born-again sinners.

Now you just stack it up. The Saviour said what man with ten thousand men is going out and jump on another fellow that has twenty thousand unless he first sits down and figures, "Can I with ten thousand men whip this fellow with twenty thousand? Can I do it?" If he cannot, he had better send an embassy and request, "Let's have peace and not fight." If you cannot face the whole question, if you do not have an answer to the question of Hell, and judgment and eternity, then I tell you now, there is only one way out, and that is to turn from your sin to Jesus Christ. There is no other way to miss Hell but through Christ alone and His shed blood. You had better take into account the fact of Hell.

Then there is death — people are going to die. You will. I come to tell you frankly that that is one of the things it will cost not to be a Christian. Oh, my friends, surely, surely, anybody in the world can say, "If it means torment of conscience, if it means the breaking down of my hopes, if it means disappointments and remorse of conscience, if it means a wasted life, if it means damning others about me, if it means enslaving myself in sin and dying without Christ, if it means Hell without relief, and judgment before the Saviour I have rejected!"

— oh, my friends, if it means that, is there anybody here who would say it pays to live for the devil and die and go to Hell? Surely, surely not!

III. The Terrible Danger of Delay

I turn to another thing which I want you to consider third and last. Oh, the terrible danger of delay! The terrible danger of delay! You agree, do you not, that whatever you give up for Jesus you gain it all back and more? Yes, and you gain Heaven and an eternity of blessedness besides. You can afford to lose everything down here. You and I will get to see mother and father and loved ones and Jesus and will have peace and joy and perfection forever. Would it not be worth what it costs to anybody down here? I know you will agree that is true. Let me tell you what danger there is in delay.

First of all if you delay about this you may be enslaved by sin. I remind you, nobody ever intends to go as far as they do in sin.

I talked to Bob Silver, a young man, after he and a man named Stone had shot down Roscoe Wilson in Fort Worth several years ago as he came from the Majestic Theater with \$5,000 in a bag. These two men shot him down and got in a Chrysler coupe and sped away. Over by the Baptist Hospital they changed cars and got in another Chrysler of another color. They started out toward Oklahoma. The officers thought they had gone down toward Houston. They combed every road looking for a certain kind of a car. As they drove over into Oklahoma, they breathed a sigh of relief, and said, "We got away."

And Bob Silver told me, "We breathed a sigh of relief, but there had been a rain, and a car had slipped off the highway. And some other cars had stopped there to help them out and had blocked the road. We stopped the car, and after a while we got out. A deputy sheriff came along. He had heard the broadcast, 'Look out for two fellows from Fort Worth, Texas, in a gray Chrysler coupe.' The car was of a different color, but the sheriff said to us, 'Wait a minute, boys, I want to talk to you.' He told me that they tried to slip back in the car and get their guns, but the sheriff pulled a gun quickly and covered them. He found in the car the \$5,000. He put handcuffs on them and brought them back to Fort Worth. Bob Silver said to me — that young man whose face was pale, he had been in solitary confinement, and whose hand was as palsied as a man of eighty — "I turned to Stone and said, 'It is God! We can't get away from God!'"

I tell you, my friends, Bob Silver never intended to go that far. "I do not know what made me shoot him," he said. "I did not mean to do it." And nobody else ever intends to go as far in sin as they do. It enslaves you. Somebody may have started to take a shot of dope but nobody intended to be a slave of dope, but some are.

Second, there is the deceit of sin. Many are blinded by sin and cannot see straight. They cannot see the truth. The devil fools you on everything. He tells you you will have plenty of time to prepare for death. He tells you preachers are after your money. He says that church members are hypocrites. The devil says, "Do not go up there to the front. You can be saved some other way." Oh, the deceit of sin! There is danger in delay.

Next, there is danger of hardening of the heart. It is a terrible thing for a man to hear the gospel and not be touched. My own heart has been stirred as I have gone over this again. Surely anybody who is not saved has a hard heart. They have gone on in sin until their heart is not stirred by a gospel message.

I have been preaching this gospel for years, and tonight God knows if I could cry my heart out for sinners to get somebody saved, I would do it. I am concerned about you, and you are not. Why? Your heart is hardened and you have come to the place where you are not concerned. No kind of preaching or Bible teaching, nothing God ever does, no sweet singing, no praying mother or wife

will ever touch your hard heart any more if you do not beware! Hardening your heart! Oh, what danger that is!

There is danger also of a wasted life. But you are in danger one of these days of committing the unpardonable sin and your heart will be so hard that you never can be saved.

And here is another thing. Anybody who postpones salvation runs a terrible danger of sudden death, unexpected death. It is a strange thing, is it not, about death, that people are never ready for it? We some way do not believe it is for us. We believe that somebody else is going to die, but we do not believe that we are. Do you expect to die very soon? No. The truth of the matter is, when Brother Chenault closed his message here that night, he did not expect to die so soon. He did not expect to die any more than you do tonight. Mr. R—, some other policeman will go to work and die who did not expect to die any sooner than others. In Dallas, Fort Worth or somewhere some policeman will be killed tonight. Is it not strange how death is always unexpected? You and I do not expect to die. A person who is sick does not expect to die. You can talk with people who have tuberculosis and they will tell you they are feeling better, and it may be very soon they will be dead! Death is an unwelcome guest. We always try to believe it is not for us yet, that it is not our time yet. The devil says, "You have plenty of time," but that is a lie. You do not know that you have any time at all. If you are not saved, I warn you now there is deadly danger that your heart will be hardened or you may die unexpectedly not ready and not prepared to meet God.

Sinner, have you counted the cost tonight? Isaiah 1:18 says:

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

I have tried to reason with you. "Come now, and let us reason together," the Lord says. Are you a sinner? Do you admit that? There is mercy and forgiveness for you if you will but take it. I told you a while ago that you had to confess your sin. You have to see sin as it is. I said that in your heart you must turn from sin. But if in your heart you have found out how wicked sin is, how it brings ruin and blights happiness, then it is not so hard to turn from sin. You ought to with the song that says,

"I hate the sin that made Thee mourn,
And drove Thee from my breast."

Oh, in my heart I wish I never had sinned. I wish I did not ever get attracted by sin.

I want to say, "Do not harden your heart." Have you counted the cost? Are you not willing to come to Jesus? It is not any trouble for you to say I will not come, I will save myself, I will not take it free. But will you say instead, "Jesus paid for my sins. I couldn't pay it. I do not have the coin to pay it with. I will trust Him to forgive me"? That is not hard.

You may say, "The world is against me if I am a Christian." But you have the devil and the world against you even if you are not a Christian. The devil's crowd will make you fall, but they will not help you up. When Judas Iscariot took the thirty pieces of silver, he thought he had some friends, but when he came back with an aching heart and said, "It is the price of blood! It is horrible, I can't get away from the thought of it!" — when he came back, they said, "See thou to that." Your friends will not help you then.

Listen to me, a fellow may get out and drink, and drink up everything he has, and lose his job, and his wife quit him, and when he has not a bite to eat and he has drunk up his last penny and his clothes are in rags — do you know who that man will come to? Do you think he will go and look up the drinking crowd and have them give him something to eat? No, he will hunt up a preacher. They come to me nearly every day. The drinking crowd will quit you. The church people are the ones they go

to when they are down and out. Somebody has said there is honor among thieves. There is not any honor among thieves. The only true friend a sinner has is Jesus Christ, and for Jesus' sake, some people are your friends. Have you counted the cost? Tonight if your sins are like scarlet, they can be as white as snow. If your heart is black, if you come to Him, He the blood of Jesus Christ tonight. Have you an unease of conscience, a fear; have haunting footsteps of remorse made bitter the nights and will forgive you and wash you in weary the days? God loves you, Jesus Christ died for you, and you can have peace.

Is there anybody here who says, "I am saved, but I find it too hard. I wish I had not gotten on the Lord's side. No one ever said, 'I am sorry I got saved'?" No, you will never find anybody like that! No, friends, come and let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Have you reasoned about it? What are you going to do about it?

If you are a Christian, I would say, "God helping me, I am going to be the best kind of a Christian I know how. I see more than ever that it pays to be a Christian. If it costs much, it is worth it. It surely is."

Is there one who is not a Christian? Do you want to be? Have you weighed it over in your mind? Can you say, "That is right"? Then will you do it tonight? What does it take to be saved? In your heart turn from your own sins and trust in Jesus Christ. That is repentance and faith. Trust Jesus, do not trust self. Trust Jesus, do not trust feelings. Trust God alone. Trust Jesus who died to save sinners. Will you depend on Him? Come like the beggar and get forgiveness free. Tonight you will be saved when you do. How many can say, "I came like that to Jesus"? How many can say, "I admitted I was a sinner and I trusted Him and He forgave me and I am saved and I know I am saved"? Will you hold your hands just a moment? Thank you.

I am going to ask you a question that I believe everybody here can vote on and I want you to do it. How many can say, "Brother Rice, I believe you weighed the thing fair and honest. I believe every argument in the world proves a man is wise to be a Christian and silly not to be, that it is wise and right and safe to be a Christian and that it is wrong and wicked and foolish not to be. I am convinced everybody ought to be a Christian and ought to be right now. It makes one happier to be a Christian. There is joy in being a Christian and there is an eternal reward in being a Christian. I am convinced of that whether I am a Christian or not"? How many can say, "Brother Rice, I believe you are right. It pays to be saved and to trust the Lord. It pays in peace and salvation and heavenly mansions in the skies. It pays in your heart and in glory to come. I am sure it pays now and it pays hereafter"?

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